

THAIS

PAUL WILSTACH



SIO

THAIS



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THAIS

*"The Story of a Sinner who Became a Saint and a
Saint who Sinned"*

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

By

PAUL WILSTACH

Founded on Anatole France's Novel of the Same Name

ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE
ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

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WITHDRAWN

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THAIS WAS PRODUCED IN NEW YORK CITY
MARCH 14, 1911, AT THE CRITERION THEATER, BY JOSEPH M. GAITES
UNDER THE STAGE DIRECTION OF LAWRENCE MARSTON

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Thaïs		Constance Collier
Daniel, a hermit of the Theban Desert		Tyrone Power
Nicias, a pagan, friend of Thaïs		Arthur Forrest
Hermodorus	} Pagans of Alexandria. Friends of Thaïs {	V. L. Granville
Dorion		A. B. Imeson
Chereas		Franklin Jones
Aristobulus		Edmund Mortimer
Eucrites		Harry Christie
Callicrates		Charles Sievert
Lucius		W. C. Bradley
Basilides		Frank Lenord
Dekon		Frank Durand
Theros		Milton King
Zenothemis, an Athenian		Fred B. Hanson
Drose	} Friends of Thaïs {	Cynthia Fane
Philina		Mary E. Forbes
Helen		May McCrea
Phroe		Gladys Carroll
Callista		Nina Heather
Euronia		Lucile Fallon
Damon, a priest from Alexandria		Mr. Imeson
Palemon	} Hermits {	Elmer Grandin
Flavian		Mr. Granville
Paul		Mr. Jones
Adhemes, Thaïs' Egyptian head servant		Mr. Grandin
Cephenes, Thaïs' cook		Sydney Greenstreet
Crobyle	} Thaïs' Greek Slave Girls {	Winifred Kingston
Myrtale		Maude Burns
First Egyptian slave		Marion Alexander
Second Egyptian slave		Rita Ricardo
Third Egyptian slave		John Ennis
Fourth Egyptian slave		H. B. Bogart
Albina, Superior of the White Sisters		Frances Younge
The Infirmary		Mary Shannon
Maria Pia		Miss Kingston
Jonatha		Miss Burns
Rosalia		Miss Forbes
Angelica		Miss Fane

Alexandrians, Greeks, Courtezans, Hermits, White Ladies,
Nubian and Other Slaves

SCENES OF THE PLAY

ACT I

The Huts of the Anchorites in the Desert

ACT II

The Marble Terrace Before the Portico of Thäis'
House in Alexandria

ACT III

The Temple of Love in Thäis' Garden

ACT IV

The Courtyard of the Retreat of the White Sisters
Near Alexandria

TIME

The Early Christian Era

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THE FIRST ACT

SCENE

The anchorites of the desert. It is night. The starlight tempers the opaque blackness and in the mysterious half-light may be discovered a group of low, square, baked-clay huts of the holy hermits of the Theban Desert. The portals are without doors, and, as there are no windows, they serve for both door and window. A few large boulders are scattered about. Other than these there is no movable object. All is barren, austere, and lifeless. Nature, as if imitative, stretches out in her most ascetic mood—a vast, unbroken, sterile waste of sand.

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AT RISE OF CURTAIN

A group of hermits at meditation and prayer are discovered. Paul sits alone, as the others disperse. He wears the dark, ragged, heavy cloth gown of the ancho-rites. It reaches to the heels; the sleeves are full, and though turned back in a deep cuff, fall below the hands; a hood is attached at the collar and is worn either on the head or pushed back on the shoulders; the gown folds in front and is held in place by a rough strap or cord. His feet are bare in sandals. And this is the habit of all the hermits.

Damon approaches. He, too, is a religious, but he is a priest of the city. He is travel-stained, and overcome with fatigue. He glances about and into the empty cells and finally he sees Paul and touches him on the shoulder.

DAMON—Brother?

PAUL—(*Rises, observes, bows, and gives the kiss of peace.*)

Peace be with you.

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DAMON—And with thy spirit. How far into the desert have I come?

PAUL—To the cells of the holy Daniel and his disciples.

DAMON—You are one of those who fast and pray with him, mortifying the flesh for the spirit's sake?

PAUL—I am Paul, and with me are Anthony and Cyril, Flavian, who knows the Scriptures and speaks well; Palemon, whose spade and prayers make the desert give up green things, and others who obey Daniel in the worship of the Lord our Savior.

(They incline their heads reverently.)

DAMON—Then praise and thanks to him who has led my footsteps hither, for I am at my journey's end.

PAUL—By your habit and your speech I

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believe that you are one with us who worship the one true living God.

DAMON—I am Damon, a priest of Alexandria. The fragrance of this holy spot has spread throughout the desert and even beyond its wastes. I have struggled in vain to dwell amid the wickedness of the city with fidelity to my vows—but I have not the strength for the battlefield, and I have come to beg Damiel that I may share the peace of his retreat.

PAUL—And do you believe that we do not battle night and day against the appetites of the flesh?

DAMON—Here the temptation is from within. I have lived surrounded by the baits of lust, for the cities are in the control of the pagans, and life is dedicated to the appetites of the flesh.

PAUL—I have heard that it is so, but I

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have been spared the trial of battling in the open field. My parents grew figs and pomegranates on the banks of the great river, and ever since my twelfth year I have lived here in prayer and meditation, apart even from the circle of mine own people. But what you say of the evil city I know is true, for even here in the sand, among the rocks, in this retreat of silence and prayer, the echo of the world reaches us, and the word it brings travels faster than the si-moon. Of what you speak I have heard, but I have not lived it, therefore I do not understand.

DAMON—But thy father, Damiel, will he not understand?

PAUL—Aye, that he will, for he is a son of the city, of your very city of Alexandria. Like you he fled its snares and its delights, and sought here in prayer and meditation to

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strengthen his spirit against the attacks of the flesh. Aye, he will make you welcome.

DAMON—May I speak with him now?

PAUL—That is his cell. But you can see it is empty. He is among the hills yonder; he meditates in the silent places. But now that night has fallen he will return soon. Follow me and you shall share my loaf.

(They depart together.)

(From another direction appears Flavian, the deacon, with a skin of water slung across his shoulder and a wounded bird in his hand. He is more mature, but, like Damon and Paul, he is slender. In passing the door of Damiel's cell he pauses and glances in. Advancing, he slings the bag of water on a peg. At the door of his own cell, which is at an angle to Damiel's, he gathers a few wisps of straw, twists them into a nest and places the bird in it near the door.)

(From another direction Palemon, an

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aged but robust monk, returns from his day's labors in the field. On his shoulder he carries a rude instrument for breaking the earth, and in a basket are the green tops of the products of his garden.)

FLAVIAN—Peace be with thee, brother Palemon.

PALEMON—And with thee, brother Flavian. What have you there?

FLAVIAN—A bird.

PALEMON—It is tame to allow you to handle it so freely.

FLAVIAN—It is wounded. I found it in a trapper's net.

PALEMON—It has a sadness in its eye, yet it is not sad either, for see how it pecks your finger. It is grateful, brother. It thanks thee.

(Palemon crosses and lays his basket

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within his cell's door, next to that of Flavian. He glances at Damiel's cell.)

Our brother Damiel has not returned?

FLAVIAN—Not yet.

PALEMON—Brother, he is not as he was.

(He sits and scrapes the earth from the implement.)

FLAVIAN—It is fasting, meditation, prayer. It is holiness.

PALEMON—It is meditation.

FLAVIAN—You think—

PALEMON—Peace, brother; I am not worthy to judge any man. *(Touching his forehead.)* But he hath here that which troubles him.

FLAVIAN—He broods upon his sins.

PALEMON—Sins? The holy Damiel?

FLAVIAN—True, a saintlier man dwells not in the desert. His holiness is like in-

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cense, and its perfume mounts continually to Heaven. It may be his passion for the salvation of souls?

PALEMON—There you border the truth, for, having no sins of his own, he allows the sins of the world to weigh heavily upon him.

FLAVIAN—His zeal is wonderful.

PALEMON—It is a fire which consumes others as perfectly as it consumes himself. I hope it is this. . . . (*Rising to go into his cell.*) Brother, I fear we forget our vow of holy silence. If there be need for confidence about this change we've noted, soon enough Damiel will tell his friend Flavian.

FLAVIAN—Or thee, Palemon. . . . He comes. See how sanctity transfigures him like the blessed martyrs in the arena. . . . Are you going?

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PALEMON—To pray forgiveness. I use idly this tongue given me to praise the Lord.

(He departs into his cell.)

(Flavian crosses toward the water-bag.)

(Damiel returns from his meditation in the desert. He is a man of thirty, of strong frame, unfleshed by fasting. He wears the worn habit of the hermit. His dark hair is matted and falls on his shoulders; his beard is short, thin, and pointed. His skin is white, his eyes are sunk deep in their sockets. His nostrils are delicate, his lips thin and colorless. He leans on a staff tall as he is, and near the top a cross-piece is spliced. . . . He is deep in thought, and his purpose seems to lead him on, his head erect, his eyes burning.)

(Flavian draws water from the bag into a small earthen bowl and presents it to Damiel, taking the staff, which he rests against the hut.)

FLAVIAN—Peace be with thee.

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DAMIEL—And with thy spirit.

(He takes the bowl in both his hands, raises his eyes in silent ejaculation, drinks, and returns the bowl to Flavian.)

DAMIEL—Brother?

FLAVIAN—*(Turns and approaches.)*

You spoke?

DAMIEL—Flavian, you have been much beloved of me.

FLAVIAN—You are my guide in Christ our Lord.

DAMIEL—I have inclined mine ear unto the Lord, and He has spoken to his servant.

FLAVIAN—A revelation!

DAMIEL—Brother, you have heard me speak of Alexandria.

FLAVIAN—The city of your birth and youth. A great city.

DAMIEL—Great in the vanities of the

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world. Great in sin. To escape its temptations I fled here into the desert.

FLAVIAN—And thou has found peace?

DAMIEL—Peace from its temptations, yes. Yet Alexandria calls me. Though a thousand times a day I banish it from my mind, still sick and suffering does it rise up before me, begging to be cured.

FLAVIAN—Is not this Heaven speaking in your heart?

DAMIEL—If I were sure!

FLAVIAN—How do you interpret what has been revealed to you?

DAMIEL—It is a call.

FLAVIAN—To abandon your retreat?

DAMIEL—Yes.

FLAVIAN—To go into the city?

DAMIEL—Yes.

FLAVIAN—And you do not fear the snares of the evil one?

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DAMIEL—Heaven will protect its servant.

FLAVIAN—You will preach the conversion of the city?

DAMIEL—First I will conquer the citadel of its vice.

FLAVIAN—The citadel of its vice?

DAMIEL—You have heard of Thais.

FLAVIAN—Aye, she who is called the perfect woman, the courtesan of Alexandria.

DAMIEL—Under her sway the city sinks in sin. . . . My brother, when a youth I followed in her train. I saw her in the theater, where she revealed her charms and spoke verses to the pagan gods. I have been near her and seen the loveliness of her flesh; in my nostrils has been the intoxicating aroma which she casts about her. At night I have stolen to her door, and only a

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merciful Heaven has stayed my hand from the latch.

FLAVIAN—Should we not give praise and thanksgiving that thou hast been removed from the path of temptation?

DAMIEL—You mean security lies here in the sands, apart from the haunts of men?

FLAVIAN—Yes.

DAMIEL—I, too, thought the way of peace lay apart, here in the wilderness. But it is vain to fly from the sin to which we abandon others. The beauty and charm of Thais corrupt everyone. The city worships her as a goddess. The threshold of her palace is adorned with flowers and bathed in blood. She ridicules virtue, and of sin she makes a religion.

FLAVIAN—Alexandria should expel her.

DAMIEL—Like a queen's subjects, they follow her.

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FLAVIAN—She is not fit to live.

DAMIEL—She is not fit to die.

FLAVIAN—I do not understand. If she be neither fit to live nor die?

DAMIEL—She must be made so. I must go to her and bear her the word of truth and life. The Lord hath sent an angel in the night to show me the beauty of this courtesan.

FLAVIAN—A vision?

DAMIEL—Darkness has become a terror. My cell has become a place of frightful combat. I fast. I pray. With scourging do I fight the enticements of the evil one. It is in vain. It cannot be without reason that Heaven abandons its servant. These visions do not come from the evil one. They are from Heaven, that I may know that I am called to save Thaïs and deliver the city of its sins.

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(Flavian moves apart. Daniel approaches Flavian.)

You do not answer.

FLAVIAN—Each man from the heart of his own experience. I am a sinner. I have not the strength to meet and conquer temptation, so I dwell apart from it. It is the only way I know. Heaven forbid I should suspect the intentions of my brother—

DAMIEL—Suspect my intentions—

FLAVIAN—Forgive me. The word does injustice equally to me and thee. But our father Anthony has said: The fish which are placed in a dry spot find death there; likewise it happens that the hermits who depart from their cells and mingle with the people of the world turn aside from good purposes.

DAMIEL—You would not have me go?

FLAVIAN—Though your friend I am

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also your disciple. You are my father, and I am not worthy to advise.

DAMIEL—Yet you fear for me.

FLAVIAN—I should fear for myself.

DAMIEL—What have you in your hand?

FLAVIAN—A bird. (*Looking upon the bird, he exclaims:*) Oh!

DAMIEL—Why do you exclaim?

FLAVIAN—It is dead. . . . This evening, as I returned from the well, I heard a fluttering near by. A bird was caught in a trapper's net. The beating of her wings and her cries of fright and pain were heard by her mate, who flew to her assistance. He beat about and pecked the net until his mate was liberated, and, throating a song of gratitude, the bird he freed flew to the sky.

DAMIEL—Brother, do you not see? It is again a revelation!

FLAVIAN—I do *not* see.

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DAMIEL—The bird in the trap, it is the woman of Alexandria, Thaïs snared by the evil one. If a bird comes and releases its mate, shall I not go and deliver Thaïs from her evil life?

FLAVIAN—(*Confused and doubtful.*) I am not learned in these things. But this I know: The bird which delivered the captive was himself trapped. His wings were broken. See, he is dead.

(*Paul returns, followed by Damon.*)

PAUL—There is Damiel.

DAMON—(*Approaching reverently.*)

You are the holy Damiel?

DAMIEL—Damiel is my name, and I am an humble servant of our Lord. (*To Flavian:*) Nay, do not go. (*To Damon:*) This is Flavian, our brother. And you?





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DAMON—I am Damon, a priest of Alexandria.

DAMIEL—Of Alexandria!

DAMON—I come to beg leave to share your life here in the desert. I cannot any longer withstand the sins of the city. It is given over to iniquity. As easily might I plunge my body into a furnace and come forth whole as to remain in that city of corruption and remain uncorrupted. It is given over entirely to the worship of a courtesan called Thaïs.

DAMIEL—So it is said. Can you tell us of her?

DAMON—Everywhere the air rings with her name. She composes pagan verses to Venus, Eros and the other gods. She recites them in the theater, and straightway they are on everyone's lips. Her train passes along the street, and clearers must

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break a way. When she appears in the theater, the benches hold but a third of the people who clamor without. And this woman, this idol of the people, is a creature of the flesh; her kisses are for sale, her beauty is merchandise. In vain have the priests of Alexandria striven to move her from the ways of her abandonment. She has been deaf to the call of Heaven. Not yet has he come who will deliver the city from Thaïs, and Thaïs from herself. . . . From her have I fled.

DAMIEL—(*His eyes are fixed straight before him. He addresses Flavian with renewed ecstasy:*) Do you not see that Heaven has directed the steps of this holy man to my cell to remind me again that the soul of Thaïs beseeches my aid?

DAMON—I am welcome?

DAMIEL—Thou art thrice welcome.

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DAMON—And I may remain?

DAMIEL—(*Embracing him.*) In humility offer thanks to the Most High. You have been the medium of a miracle. Henceforth you are one with us. Follow your brother Paul. (*Raises his hand in blessing.*)

(*Damon and Paul retire together.*)

DAMIEL—Now are you convinced?

FLAVIAN—Dare I speak?

DAMIEL—Aye, speak that which feeds your fears and robs me of your free assent.

FLAVIAN—The desert is the house of your adoption. In silence, solitude, fasting and prayer have you placed the hope of your salvation. This may be but another temptation of the evil one. Be slow to believe other than that. Be content where you are. You have chosen your portion.

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It is here. Hold fast to that which you have.

DAMIEL—Twice within the hour has Heaven spoken. Is not the bird's release a figure of the succor I must take to the ensnared woman? Has not this priest been sent a witness of her need? And should Heaven speak a third time? You are silent.

FLAVIAN—Night is upon us. Pray, and I will pray with you that light may come to you, and that this temptation may pass.

(He raises his hand in benediction and crosses to a heap of embers against the wall. Taking a knotted stick and lighting it, he passes into his cell.)

(It has grown quite dark, and the light from Flavian's cell falls in an amber streak along the ground before the opening to Damiel's cell.)





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DAMIEL—(*Stands unmoved in the darkness, gazing straight before him.*)

“Not yet has he come who will deliver the city from Thaïs, and Thaïs from herself.”
. . . . Is it is it temptation, or in these things do I see the hand of God?

(*He draws the hood over his head and before his face. He folds his hands in his sleeves and raises them to his face, plunged in contemplative struggle. Slowly he moves to his cell. At the door he starts back, as if dreading a renewal of “the frightful combat” of which he has told Flavian. He falls on his knees in prayer, and then stretches himself on the rude cot before the door of his cell. His eyes close in sleep.*)

(*Infinitely soft music of quivering strings is heard, as if the night winds whispered. Almost imperceptibly, as if the moon passed from behind a cloud, a faint aureola of light appears above Damiel’s cell. Gradually the accustomed*

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eye defines in it the figure of Thaïs wrapped in a diaphanous veil of rosy tints. She postures with grace, the lines of her limbs and body and arms dissolving from one pose to another. At last her plastic caresses are directed to Damiel beneath her, and she puts into her movement every allurements her art can suggest. Damiel's deep breathing grows into troubled moaning, and finally into the groans of one in agony and travail. He struggles to break the fetters of the spell, and finally gains his feet, staggers, and falls to the ground in great perturbation of spirit. As he awakened the vision faded and disappeared. Damiel's groans and cries having awakened Paul, he rushes to Damiel and tries to raise him, calling his brothers to aid him:)

PAUL—Flavian, Cyril, Anthony, brothers! Brothers!

(The others rush out of the cells, Flavian bearing the torch, which breaks somewhat the blackness of the night. They raise Damiel to his feet.)

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DAMIEL—You have seen! You have seen!

OMNES—What? What have you seen?

DAMIEL—In my sleep, a vision!

OMNES—A vision!

DAMIEL—Thaïs! Thaïs! Again has Heaven called me.

FLAVIAN—It is the evil one.

DAMIEL—It is from Heaven. Thrice to-night have I been called.

FLAVIAN—Nay. Consider. Pray.

DAMIEL—Yea, pray for me, brothers; pray for your brother Damiel. But I—for me has come the hour of action.

FLAVIAN—What would you do?

DAMIEL—I go to Alexandria. To save Thaïs!

(He grasps the rood as a warrior would a standard. Holding it before

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*him, he walks forth across the sands in
the direction of the city.)*

(The curtain falls.)

END OF ACT ONE

THE SECOND ACT

SCENE

A marble terrace before the house of Thäis in Alexandria. On one side (Left) rises a lofty pillared portico with many steps before the house. On the opposite side (Right) is a high marble wall, broken midway by an arched opening leading down a flight of unseen steps to the street. This wall is joined to the house by a long low stone parapet, beyond which may be seen the city of Alexandria stretching in white immensity to the bronze surface of the Nile under a cloudless sun-baked turquoise sky. An embroidered canopy screens the greater part of the terrace, suffusing the scene with a soft-tinted glow. Within the portico are two tall bronze tripods, surmounted with bowls of purple bloom, and near them are huge earthen bowls filled with poppies. "Soft rugs from By-

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santium" dress the steps to the portico; they hang over the parapet and carpet the terrace. In the center of the terrace is a couch draped with a covering of cloth of gold. Near it is a table of ormolu, on which stand wine pitchers, gold drinking goblets, jeweled boxes of perfume and ointments. On one side is a carved stone seat, on the other side an ebony chair inlaid with pearl and ivory. The note of the picture is sybaritism, opulent to the point of decadence.

AT RISE OF CURTAIN

From the street below may be heard the hum of a crowd—laughing, singing and calling to one another; the crack of charioteers' whips, and the music of the hoofs and wheels on the pavements.

Two Nubians spread rugs before the couch. Egyptian slaves bring vases and pitchers, exchanging them for those on the table.

CROBYLE—(A beautiful Greek slave girl, her nakedness draped in jeweled transpar-

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encies, runs out of the house. At the edge of the portico and again at the foot of the steps she turns, calling:)

Myrtale! Myrtale!

(She glides up to the parapet.)

Oh! Oh! They are passing! Oh, Myrtale!

(Returning to the portico and calling into the house:)

Myrtale! Myrtale! Come, come. The performance at the theater is concluded. Come, the crowds are in the street. Myrtale!

(She runs back again to the parapet and, hanging over, waves her graceful little arms to admirers in the street below.)

MYRTALE—*(Runs from the house. She, too, is a beautiful white slave girl, so enveloped in draperies and jewels as to best reveal the lines of her beautiful body.*

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She hurries to Crobyle's side, and with her watches the crowd below.)

CROBYLE—See, see, yonder is Chereas, driving his Judean chargers.

MYRTALE—And Aristobulus paces him. See Granio in the crimson tunic. He has the head and limbs of Eros.

CROBYLE—He looks up here.

MYRTALE—(*Waves to him.*) It is Marcus Gallia with him.

CROBYLE—They are twins for loveliness.

MYRTALE—The gods fashioned him in their own likeness.

CROBYLE—How they stare.

MYRTALE—Pretend to see them not.

CROBYLE—See Sagitallis. Save Nicias, none has more slaves in Alexandria.

MYRTALE—Nor more beautiful. They come from Syria. Ah! Antonius. See!

(From a basket slung to the parapet

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she seizes handfuls of crimson blossoms and tosses them into the air, showering herself and those below. Answering laughter comes up in the midst of the street's hum.)

CROBYLE—(*Throws out a rope of flowers.*) Wear that, Miletus, wear that.

ADHEMES—(*An Egyptian, Thaïs' head-servant, enters from the street through the archway in the wall. His dress is very splendid.*)

Crobyle! Myrtale! The crowds come from the theater. Friends of our mistress come. Nicias comes to make preparations here for the supper he will take with her.

(Myrtale and Crobyle run down to Adhemes, bowing on either side of him.)

MYRTALE—We knew.

CROBYLE—All things are ready. His bath—

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MYRTALE—His robes—

CROBYLE—Perfumes, ointments, wine—

MYRTALE—All wait on his coming—

ADHEMES—A plague on his bath and ointments! There's bigger business here to-day. Thais brings home a crowd to sup with her.

CROBYLE—There's preparation's call—
come—

ADHEMES—(*To Egyptian woman slave.*)
Send Cephene. (*Exit Egyptian man slave.*
To other Egyptian slaves:) Let the large
hall be garlanded and lit. (*Exit Egyptian*
men slaves.) Use only the service of gold.
(*Exeunt Nubian slaves.*) Strew the table
with poppies and burn incense. Go. (*Exe-*
unt Egyptian women slaves.)

MYRTALE—This is good news. I like it
when the men troop in.

(*Crobyle and Myrtale run into the house,*

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laughing. Cephene's, a red-faced, fat slave, Thais' cook, enters through the portico.)

ADHEMES—Ah, Cephene's, our mistress dines at home to-day.

CEPHENES—At home? But not alone?

ADHEMES—Nicias and other friends will come.

CEPHENES—Nicias, of course. His name was on my tongue.

ADHEMES—Being an indiscreet tongue, it could not conceal its impudence.

CEPHENES—Being a marvelous epicurean tongue, it knew it spoke a brother.

ADHEMES—Rest your tongue and give me a report of your larder. What can you prepare for a dozen guests or more?

CEPHENES—Think not to rout me. I was not Nicias' cook for half a score of years for nought.

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ADHEMES—What has the boaster's larder?

CEPHENES—What say you to fishes boiled in oil, served in date leaves—ram's meat in jelly—pheasants with truffles and spices—flamingoes' tongues, pomegranates, olives and citrons, melons from the green valley to the south, cheese of Calabrian goats' milk, to be eaten with honey of Thes-salian bees—

ADHEMES—Enough! I asked that you answer me, not torture me. . . . Add the rarest wines, and hasten.

CEPHENES—With such speed as the gods give the runt-legged.

(He waddles up the steps.)

ADHEMES—And, Cephenees, fear not to prepare abundance.

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CEPHENES—Especially of fishes in oil and ram's meat in jelly? Ho! ho!

ADHEMES—It would be a scandal that the guests of Thaïs had left her table hungry—

CEPHENES—And in leaving had left nothing for hungry Adhemes? Oh! Ho! ho!

ADHEMES—The gods be praised for sending us a mistress whose friends have bellies for food and heads for wine.

CEPHENES—Thaïs herself hath a nice taste for delicacies.

ADHEMES—And by the token of her own appetite she understands the desire of good things in the mouths of others.

CEPHENES—Aye, a good appetite is a gift of the gods. Were there no appetites, there would be no cooks, and were there no cooks, I ask you now, where should I be?

THAIS

ADHEMES—True, set before me good food—

CEPHENES—And abundance—

ADHEMES—And abundance,—and to-morrow may come at its own gait.

CEPHENES—'Tis a strange world, a mess of many tastes. One finds happiness in the concord of sweet sounds; another in the languor of spiced perfumes; another in all that the eye can feast on; another in the embraces of fair women. But I tell you, Adhemes, as sure as Bacchus has placed me deputy over the pots and kettles, spits, spoons and wine-vats—a man has energy for none of these whose belly is empty.

ADHEMES—Your philosophy rivals your victuals— But, hark—while you stand here prattling of your pans and kettles, the others are upon us. In—in—

(They go into the house.)

THAIS

(Nicias returns from the theater, accompanied by Dorion and Hermodorus.)

NICIAS—Come up, my friends. As if this house were still my own, I bid you welcome. In Thaïs' name, to Thaïs' house I bid you welcome. Within! Within!

(During the following the Greek slave girls enter and relieve the men of their mantles and serve them with wine and anoint them.)

HERMODORUS—How welcome are her couches and her shade after the stones and glare of the theater. This loveliness about us is Nicias' creation, and Nicias orders his life after a pattern which breeds delights.

(Reclining on the couch. Myrtale anoints his locks.)

NICIAS—Of which delights you are indeed a judge.

THAIS

DORION—If Nicias were a Christian, by Bacchus, he'd be nothing less than an anchorite in the desert.

NICIAS—By all the stars which the Chaldeans read, how would you argue me an anchorite?

DORION—I do not— 'Tis argued by the marvelous completeness of all you undertake. Witness this palace, the beauty about us, the grace of every detail of your life,—all proof of the completeness of your devotion to a life of pleasure, true end of every sane man's desire. In this I see what, as a follower of the Nazarene, would drive you from all this allurements of the flesh to its last avoidance.

(Sits on the bench near the gate. Myrtale anoints Dorion.)

HERMODORUS—A tricky maze of words—

THAIS

NICIAS—And yet, there's sense in what he says, since my judgment, inclination—what you will—drives me to quite opposite extremes from the pleasure-haters of the wilderness.

HERMODORUS—I find sense in no philosophy but that of him who said: "I see, therefore I am." I see, I feel, I smell, I taste—they are the infallible guides to my existence. By Eros, when I can no longer smell, hear, touch, see and taste—then will I know the gods have translated me to the realms of Pluto.

NICIAS—Experience is Life, and all Life is pleasure or pain. What philosopher could not make choice between these? The mistress of pleasure is Venus. While I love I am. When the flesh withers and the blood cools—when I cease to love, then will I cease to live.

THAIS

HERMODORUS—Well argued. My mistress is Venus.

NICIAS—Mine is not the goddess, but her incarnation,—her priestess. Her lips are like the petals of blown roses; her breath is sweet as the night-wind from Cyprus; her touch is the awakening, her caress is life.

HERMODORUS—(*Softly, in reverie.*)
Thaïs.

DORION—(*Softly, in reverie.*)
Thaïs

(Egyptian slaves enter from the house, the men serving wine and the women bearing fans. Eucrites and Zenothemis come up to the terrace from the street.)

NICIAS—Here are others Eucrites
. . . . Zenothemis.

ZENOTHEMIS—Greeting, Nicias.

NICIAS—Welcome. My friends,
Dorion and Hermodorus.

ZENOTHEMIS—This hospitality and its

THAIS

promise is a fitting climax to a day which, of all the days of my journey about the shores of the great sea, is not matched by any other.

NICIAS—Praise from an Athenian is precious.

ZENOTHEMIS—At your theater I have heard poetry from the lips of Polyxena reincarnated. I am made welcome to the most notable company of Alexandria. To round the joys of a perfect day, I am invited here, to the table of Thaïs.

HERMODORUS—The verses of Polyxena became her well.

NICIAS—For my part, her silences were more seductive. What a picture she was as she appeared first at the door of the tent. With her white arm she held above her head the heavy cloth. Motionless as a splendid statue, save for the quiet glance of her

THAIS

violet eyes. Her beauty tingles the blood like a sweet poison and the eyes close softly in the blindness of love.

ZENOTHEMIS—She is a sister of the Graces.

HERMODORUS—You have never known the touch of woman until Thaïs lays her soft arms about your neck. Her eyes know how to express everything.

DORION—The priestess of Venus gives much suffering.

NICIAS—But she provides the cure.

ZENOTHEMIS—How blessed is Alexandria in the possession of Thaïs.

HERMODORUS—How favored is Nicias in the favor of Thaïs.

NICIAS—How favored are we all in the gifts of the gods, gifts epitomized in the priestess whose health we drink.

(All drink.)

THAIS

Against her coming shortly, let us within to the pool and refresh ourselves in cool waters. Eucrites, bear Zenothemis company. Dorion, I will follow you and Hermodorus.

(All precede him into the portico.)

(A noise of voices approaches along the street below. Adhemes has returned from within the portico and he has gone up to the parapet to watch the crowd.)

(Nicias pauses on the steps, his attention attracted by the sudden hum, and listens.)

NICIAS—What passes in the street?

ADHEMES—A crowd of men and boys.

NICIAS—Well, and do they follow their own shadows?

ADHEMES—There's some one in their midst, they mock him and pull his beard.

NICIAS—Looks he like one of my friends?

THAIS

ADHEMES—One of your friends! You should see him. He hath the marks of a beggar. I think his tunic is a meal-bag. . . . They're stopping here below the terrace.

NICIAS—Well, let the dogs frolic.

(Departs into house.)

ADHEMES—*(Does not perceive Nicias' departure and, from the parapet, he continues to acquaint him with what passes below in the street.)* He is asking the direction. They point this way. He approaches the gateway. By Bacchus, the beggar ascends—

(He turns, discovers himself alone, crosses to the portico after Nicias, glances back toward the gateway, and finds himself in the presence of the stranger.)

DAMIEL—*(Enters through the archway.*

THAIS

He wears the same coarse habit of the anchorite and carries the rood with which he has picked his way from the desert to the city.) Peace, brother.

ADHEMES—Out, beggar! out with you!

DAMIEL—My brother, I ask nothing of you save that I may talk with your master, Nicias.

ADHEMES—Nicias is not my master.

DAMIEL—I seek him, and was told I should find him here.

ADHEMES—He has no time for such as you. Out, I say, out, or take a beating with this staff.

DAMIEL—Strike if you will, but do what I have asked of you, I pray.

ADHEMES—(*Trembling with astonishment.*) Who are you that do not fear suffering?

DAMIEL—Nicias was a friend of my

THAIS

youth. Tell him that Damiel, a hermit of the Theban Desert, waits upon him.

ADHEMES—(*He ascends the steps into the portico, muttering with astonishment:*)

Damiel, the anchorite the holy hermit, Damiel.

NICIAS—(*Returning through the portico.*) What was that commotion?

ADHEMES—A man who says he is a friend of yours—Damiel, the hermit.

(*Disappears into the house.*)

NICIAS—Incredible! (*Approaches Damiel and scrutinizes his features.*) You—you Damiel?

DAMIEL—Aye.

NICIAS—(*He takes Damiel's hand and turns him, that he may better search his face.*) Aye, it is Damiel. You are but the shadow of your former self.

THAIS

DAMIEL—What is the self of man, my brother? This shell informed with appetites? To me, Nicias, the corporate is indeed the shadow, the perishable—the real self of man is that which comes awhile to dwell in the shadow of this shell.

NICIAS—A mystic still.

DAMIEL—A Christian.

NICIAS—You have not, then, abjured the superstitions of this Judean faith? Nay, tell me you have; let me welcome you once again to the joys of living. Tell me the desert is to know you no longer. Proclaim your return to life, to your old haunts, your old friends, the ancient delights.

DAMIEL—Peace. Your words are idle. I have not abjured what you call superstition—I still worship the living God, by whom all has been done, and nothing has been done that has been done without him.

THAIS

NICIAS—Ha! And do you think to move me with your recital of words assembled without art? Do you think to satisfy me with some fragments wrested by ignorant men from the greatness of Amelius, when Amelius, Porphyry and Plato in all their glory do not satisfy me? My friend, I, too, am somewhat of a philosopher.

DAMIEL—You toy with half-truths.

NICIAS—True. Such is the purpose of philosophy. Humanity must be diverted. The systems constructed by the sages are mere tales invented to amuse the eternal childhood of men.

DAMIEL—As you will. It is not for controversy that I have come.

NICIAS—The fault is mine, I own. But—your errand? Tell me. What brings you to Alexandria? In advance, I'll guess No, I own myself defeated. You are

THAIS

a disciple of the spirit, I of the flesh. I own my one guess, a woman, bowls me out.

DAMIEL—Cease your jesting. It is a woman that has brought me hither.

NICIAS—No? Ye gods! Here's common ground! Again we stand with feet upon the earth. Your senses have returned—the voice of nature speaks—in spite of protestations, you are—you are, as I am—a man! Oh, ha! ha! ha! A woman?

DAMIEL—Yes.

NICIAS—She's beautiful, of course?

DAMIEL—(*Still with the gaze transfixed.*) The most beautiful in Alexandria!

NICIAS—The nut gives up its kernel! The secret's out. A woman! And the most beautiful in Alexandria? (*Laughs.*) (*Insinuatingly.*) For all we know, the most beautiful woman in all the world, eh?

DAMIEL—For all I know.

THAIS

NICIAS—Freed or bond?

DAMIEL—Both.

NICIAS—Both?

DAMIEL—To men a mistress, to herself a slave.

NICIAS—A courtezan! I honor your completeness. You sin royally. Some fair unknown? Her name.

DAMIEL—Even as her kisses, it is on all men's lips.

NICIAS—She is—?

DAMIEL—Thaïs.

NICIAS—(*Starts with astonishment, then storms with resentment:*) Thaïs. You—you? You are bold thus to confess yourself to me. You and Thaïs! Do you not know no no of course you would not know. (*His anger yields to the appearance of the hermit as he slantwise eyes him.*) Thaïs? ha, ha, ha!

THAIS

. . . . This will amuse her. Here's grist for the wits. . . . So the beauty of Thaïs has drawn you from the sterile desert?

DAMIEL—(*As before, in this talk with Nicias he is hurt, but conceals it behind drooped eyelids and a soft answer.*)

I cannot speak with you of that of which you know not or deny. . . . Neither her beauty nor her body has drawn me hither, but that part of her which lives.

NICIAS—(*Cynically.*) Her soul?

DAMIEL—Yes.

NICIAS—And you would lead her back with you to make your desert bloom?

DAMIEL—(*Again concealing the pain.*) There is, at a distance of twelve hours to the west, where the sea washes the sand, a retreat of holy women. I will snatch Thaïs from her unclean loves, and thither will I lead her.

THAIS

NICIAS—You speak with certainty.

DAMIEL—Truth is its anchor.

NICIAS—You think with a wish and a word—

DAMIEL—With faith and will—

NICIAS—Faith and will— Damiel, you were always an enigma to me. . . . But . . . if I heard seriously this dream of yours to snatch the divine Thaïs from us, . . . I . . . (*Lightly again:*) Well, you have faith and I am a skeptic. So be it. For Thaïs I fear nothing. For you . . .

DAMIEL—For me?

NICIAS—Beware of Venus if you do bear away her most illustrious priestess. The vengeance of Venus is terrible.

DAMIEL—I fear nothing.

NICIAS—(*Smiles at this singular confidence and, glancing over the hermit's rude garment, he replies lightly:*)





THAIS

But this surely you fear: to appear before the goddess in these hermit rags?

DAMIEL—They are my shield and my armor.

NICIAS—They'll be your undoing, for they will disclose at once your character—an anchorite, a hermit. . . . She fears anchorites as she does magi, hermits as she would sybils and sorcerers. (*Claps his hands.*) Within, there! You shall have a tunic as becomes the company. I'll lend you one of mine. (*Adhemes appears.*) Bid Crobyle and Myrtale bring a tunic here, sandals, headpiece and perfume. Make haste.

(*Adhemes retires within.*)

DAMIEL—Without it I would be dismissed?

NICIAS—Without a doubt. Be sure that I

THAIS

advise what's best. I'm eager you should try your arts upon the courtesan.

(Crobyle and Myrtale run out, followed by Egyptian and Nubian slaves bearing tunic, sandals and headpiece.)

Here are the slave girls. I commit you to their hands. Attend him.

(They kneel at either side of Damiel and buckle on the gilt sandals. Rising, they hold the tunic and he draws it about him.)

DAMIEL—Nicias, let not these things be an offense to thine eyes. Know that I shall make a pious use of these pagan garments.

NICIAS—I suspect no evil, my friend, for I believe that men are equally incapable of doing good or doing evil. Good and evil exist only in the minds of men.

(In serving Damiel the slaves play about him, adjusting and arranging, standing off to note the effect, laughing.)

THAIS

Daniel retains a battling aloofness, indicative of his fear of these houri and of his compromise in putting on these profane robes.)

CROBYLE—We have sweet waters, sir. Shall we perfume thy head and beard?

DAMIEL—I want no perfumes. Take thyself away.

MYRTALE—But thy hair, it's matted with the dust and sweat

DAMIEL—Begone.

(Takes the jeweled headpiece from Myrtale's extended hands and, holding it aloof as if crowning himself, rests it on his head.)

NICIAS—It's most becoming. *(To the slaves:)* Go in. *(The slaves retire.)* You are in all parts appareled to make appearance before our Thaïs.

DAMIEL—And now, Nicias, thanks and farewell.

THAIS

NICIAS—Farewell? Whither do you go?

DAMIEL—To the house of Thaïs.

NICIAS—To the house of Thaïs?

DAMIEL—Yes.

NICIAS—You do not know? This is the house of Thaïs.

DAMIEL—This her house? Thaïs lives here?

NICIAS—I thought you knew.

DAMIEL—I asked for you and was directed here.

NICIAS—(*Laughing.*) True, I'm much at home here.

DAMIEL—Thaïs' house!

(*Starting toward the arch.*)

NICIAS—What indecision is this? You would see her, yet you fly.

DAMIEL—I will return.

NICIAS—I fear you're trapped.

THAIS

DAMIEL—Trapped?

NICIAS—She comes. Do you not hear the shouts of the attending crowds? She's on her way from the theater. She's in the street below already. Stay and you shall see her at once.

DAMIEL—No! no! Not now.

NICIAS—Then go within and I will summon you.

*(Damiel rushes through the portico.)
(From the street comes Chereas, followed by Aristobulus, two handsome youths, bearing wreathes and garlands.)*

CHEREAS—Send the servants to stay the crowds.

ARISTOBULUS—They'll break the gates and swarm through the house.

NICIAS—Within! Adhemes! Cephemes! Within, there!

CHEREAS—I'll see to Philina.

THAIS

(He rushes below to the street again.)

ARISTOBULUS—And I to Drose.

(Hurrying after Chereas.)

(Enter Adhemes and other slaves from the portico.)

NICIAS—Quick. Below. [This way
. . . . Make way for Thaïs, her friends,
and none beside.

(Adhemes and others hurry through the gateway to the street below.)

(From the house come Dorion, Zenothemis, Hermodorus and Eucrites.)

THESE FOUR—She comes? It is Thaïs?
[The crowd as usual.

(They run to the parapet and look below.)

HERMODORUS—What a crowd.

NICIAS—There are hundreds.

THAIS

ZENOTHEMIS—It is as if the streets were paved with pates.

HERMODORUS—Every one carries flowers.

ZENOTHEMIS—They have wreathed her.

HERMODORUS—And her bearers.

(Chereas returns with Philina, a beautiful courtesan, Aristobulus and Drose, her companion. They turn at the gate and the four men run down from the parapet. All look through the gateway to the street below, laughing and expectant.)

NICIAS—They're storming her with flowers.

DORION—Quick, Thaïs!

DROSE—Her way is a carpet of buds.

PHILINA—Come! Quick! Quick!

(The crowd throw flowers through the gate and flowers rain over the wall in showers. All at the gate retire toward

THAIS

the portico, laughing and warding off the flowers. The whole terrace is a bed of blossoms. In the midst of all the bloom, Thais, wreathed in ropes of flowers, bursts in with Nicias, followed by the servants, who block the gateway, pushing the crowd down.)

THAIS—(*Laughing and waving her ropes of flowers, floats across the terrace.*)

Philina! Drose! Dorion! Hermodorus!

(Wreathing the two men with ropes.)

There! There! With chains of flowers I enchain you.

(Chereas and Aristobulus come to her.)

CHEREAS—We, too, are your slaves.

ARISTOBULUS—Will you not manacle us?

THAIS—Aye, with these two arms, love's own chains.

(Throws her arms about them, laughing.)

NICIAS—And I?

THAIS

THAIS—You?

NICIAS—I, too, am your slave. How will you seal my bondage?

THAIS—While the words hang warm on your lips, with a kiss. (*Kisses him.*) You were all at the theater?

OMNES—All.

THAIS—I knew you were. My faithful friends! I wanted to steal but one glance out upon the benches but a goddess a goddess does not search for mortals. . . . Liked you Polyxena?

HERMODORUS—'Twas wonderful.

CHEREAS—A marvel.

EUCRITES—Your masterpiece.

THAIS—Thanks! Thanks! The gods will bless you. . . . Chereas, was I beautiful?

CHEREAS—As thyself.

THAIS—Your wits improve. . . . (*To*

THAIS

Aristobulus:) Thought you they were moved?

ARISTOBULUS—As wind-driven clouds.

THAIS—Oh! (*To Hermodorus:*) What said they?

HERMODORUS—You ne'er before had shown such power.

THAIS—Ah! And such a crowd it was! Was ever such a greeting? Such silence! Such applause! And when I left the stage What think you?

ALL—What?

THAIS—The crowd demands the play again, at once, to-morrow. As I left the theater thousands stood about the door and cheered me, and fought to draw my chariot.

ALL—Wonderful! Remarkable! It's your desert!

THAIS—Nay, more.

ALL—No!

THAIS

THAIS—Better still.

ALL—What?

THAIS—I go to Rome!

ALL—No? To Rome? No! No!

THAIS—The legate of the Emperor was there, saw my Polyxena, and straightway all is settled.

ALL—To Rome! To Rome! No! No!

NICIAS—How shall we spare you?

CHEREAS—Rome steals our most precious jewel.

HERMODORUS—You shall not go.

ARISTOBULUS—(*Kneels at her feet.*) I'll sink the ship that bears you.

NICIAS—I'll lead an army to storm the city and bring you back in triumph.

THAIS—My friends! My friends!

(In playful supplication amid general laughter.)

THAIS

NICIAS—Thaïs, you are indeed upon the heights.

THAIS—I feel it. I stand aloft alone. . . . and tremble. Nought have the gods denied me. All I have striven for is mine. The cup of my desire is full. My hands, my heart, my life is full. If yesterday I had one unfulfilled wish, to-day has robbed me of it.

DORION—And to-morrow, Thaïs?

THAIS—Ah, Dorion. Our good, gruff friend, Dorion, who wears the masque of cynic and thinks to frighten us. Why do you sit apart and silent on the steps, while others crowd about and all are gay?

DORION—I am not less amused than they.

THAIS—Your sharp tongue frightens me not.

DORION—Yet you do not answer.

THAIS—You asked about—

THAIS

DORION—To-morrow.

THAIS—To-morrow? Aye, it's troublesome. To-morrow. What is it? A shadow we pursue and never overtake. It is there and it is not. We reach and grasp it, and in our hand we hold to-day. A beacon to ambition; a crutch the idle lean upon. The mother of fear; the cave of uncertainty; the refuge of the vanquished; a ledger where knaves write promises; a bank in which the idle store their hopes; the sword which conscience hangs above us; a fixture unattainable; a threat, a hope, a lure. To-morrow! It is nowhere save in the fool's calendar.

DORION—You embroider in words; you do not answer.

THAIS—My to-morrows, as my yesterdays, I consecrate to joy, to love, to conquest.

(She sweeps to the couch and sits.)

THAIS

NICIAS—That's more in the humor of the Thaïs we revere. Count two more pilgrims at your shrine. Welcome Zenothemis of Athens.

ZENOTHEMIS—(*Kneels.*) I lay the tribute of the Greeks at your feet.

THAIS—(*Gives her hand.*) Greece! You come from Athens? The playground of the gods! To live and not to be in Athens is but to counterfeit the joy of living. . . . The other?

NICIAS—Friends, I am loathe to disclose him. We are not ready to give up our queen. (*Laughs quietly.*)

THAIS—You mock me.

NICIAS—I but think of the comedy in store.

THAIS—Comedy?

NICIAS—You, Thaïs, who have so often represented the griefs of the gods in others'

THAIS

tragedies, shall not act, but shall be yourself the heroine of your own comedy.

THAIS—Who writes it? Pallarium? Alcestius? Chereas? Dorion? Nay, or thee, my Nicias?

NICIAS—It is not written. It shall not be written, save when we have passed and tradition gathers up the threads in counterfeit. Your comedy, Thaïs, you shall live.

THAIS—Unravel your riddles. What metaphor is this?

NICIAS—This day, less than an hour ago, here on this very spot, there came to me a boyhood friend. He had journeyed far, drawn by the wide repute of Thaïs' charms.

CHEREAS—Another lover!

ALL—Who is he? Come. Come. Who is he?

THAIS—You interest me now. Whence

THAIS

comes the stranger? Athens? Rome? Or far Hispania?

NICIAS—From none of these. From any one of these a rival I might fear, and that would be a tragedy.

THAIS—Whence is he, then?

NICIAS—He shall tell you.

THAIS—His name?

NICIAS—Ask him.

THAIS—And is he comely?

NICIAS—You shall see.

THAIS—Since you will tell me nothing, summon the stranger, that I may ask and see and judge of his appeal.

NICIAS—Behold him, for he approaches by the portico.

DAMIEL—(*Appears in the portico and advances to the top of the steps, searching the faces of the courtezans.*)

Which of you is Thaïs?

THAIS

THAIS—(*Rising and confronting him.*)
Which of us answers to the repute of her
fame? That is not a question I am wont to
hear, for I am Thaïs. Your beginning is
bad. You do not flatter me.

DAMIEL—I came not to flatter you.

THAIS—You came

DAMIEL—That you may hear the truth.

THAIS—That is the luxury of none save
jealous women. . . . Your name?

DAMIEL—Damiel.

THAIS—Whence came you here?

DAMIEL—I have come out of the desert.
The hand which drew Abraham from
Chaldea and Lot from Sodom has separated
me from the world. I no longer exist for
men. But your image appeared to me in
my Jerusalem of the sands, and I have come
before you as before a sepulcher, and I say
to you, arise and follow me.

THAIS

THAIS—(*This mysterious speech makes a deep impression. The silence of apprehension is on her.*)

I do not understand. You speak a language strange to my ears. (*Rising and advancing.*) Who are you that you dare speak thus to Thais? You are “not of the world”? You “exist not for men”? Your “Jerusalem of the sands”?

(*As if fascinated by him, she draws nearer and nearer, and asks with a note of dreading his reply.*)

You are you are a hermit?

DAMIEL—Yes.

THAIS—(*With terror.*) Oh! (*Rushes past him and throws herself in Nicias' arms.*)

Do not let him touch me. He has charms and spells. Let him not rob me of my beauty; let him not strike me dead.





THAIS

NICIAS—I'll vouch for that. Fear not.

THAIS—I do not want to die. I dare not yet. Life is so pleasant. . . .

NICIAS—You shall not die.

THAIS—Not yet not yet

NICIAS—Fear not; he comes not in anger to you, Thaïs. He has been drawn by the silken thread of love.

THAIS—Love? He spoke not of love.

NICIAS—He loves you.

THAIS—Nay, surely this man comes not to join my train— He to love me?—impossible!

NICIAS—Did I not promise you a comedy?

THAIS—A comedy indeed.

NICIAS—Be gracious to him, Thaïs. Be gracious, as you know how so well.

THAIS—(*Regains her confidence by degrees and, with a self-amusing interest,*

THAIS

she swings in a circle behind Daniel and approaches him from the other side.)

Priest Daniel Your name is Daniel?

DAMIEL—(*With apprehension and an obvious effort for self-control.*)

My name is Daniel.

THAIS—I like it not—not so well as priest. That title becomes you. I feel the kinship. . . . Oh, be not surprised, for am I not a priestess, at that altar where all mankind worship . . . in the temple of love? . . . Priest, you were brave to venture here.

DAMIEL—I fear nothing.

THAIS—Are you invulnerable? Achilles was not that.

DAMIEL—I am protected.

THAIS—Nay, be generous; if you would

THAIS

find me in a kindly mood, humor me a little.
. . . . What offering do you bring?

DAMIEL—None.

THAIS—A compliment were not amiss
. . . . no vanity so vain it's callous to a
compliment.

DAMIEL—I do not see in thee what others
see.

THAIS—You see, my friends, I'm impotent. Unless my prayer, as Sappho's, will draw immortal Venus from Heaven to earth again.

ALL. Yes. The prayer. The Hymn to Venus. Sappho's hymn. Come. Come.

THAIS—(*As the crowd breaks and circles her and the players of the lute and cythera give tone, she raises her arms and intones Sappho's Hymn to Venus.**)

O Venus, beauty of the skies,
To whom a thousand temples rise,

*Translation by Ambrose Philips, 1711.

THAIS

Gaily false in gentle smiles,
Full of love-perplexing wiles;
O Goddess, from my heart remove
The wasting cares and pains of love.

If ever thou hast kindly heard
A song in soft distress preferred,
Propitious to my tuneful vow,
O gentle Goddess, hear me now.
Descend, thou bright immortal guest,
In all thy radiant charms confessed.

Thou once did leave immortal Jove
And all the golden roofs above:
The car thy wanton sparrows drew,
Hovering in air they lightly flew;
As to thy bower they winged their way
I saw their quivering pinions play.

The birds dismissed (while you remain)
Bore back their empty car again:
Then you with looks divinely mild,
In every heavenly feature smiled,
And asked what new complaints I made,
And why I called you to my aid.

(Drawing nearer to Damiel.)

THAIS

What frenzy in my bosom raged,
And by what cure to be assuaged?
What gentle youth I would allure,
Whom in my artful toils secure?
Who does thy tender heart subdue,
Tell me, my Sappho, tell me who?

(At Daniel's elbow.)

Though now he shuns thy longing arms,
He soon shall court thy slighted charms;
Though now thy offerings he despise,
He soon to thee shall sacrifice;
Though now he freeze, he soon shall burn,
And be thy victim in his turn.

Look, Daniel, look upon this beauty which
has drawn you from afar.

DAMIEL—*(With a struggle.)* No! No!
Not thy beauty, for thou art not beautiful.
Thou art deformed, defiled, hideous!

THAIS—Hideous?

DAMIEL—Aye, hideous!

THAIS—What! You dare tell me this?

THAIS

Beggar! Toad! You dare tell Thaïs she is hideous? Do you not know that I am the darling of men, the queen of this capital, the idol of the people? Accomplishment leaps before my softest breathed desire. Nothing have I ever been refused. My word creates and destroys. Your life I hold here in this hand. Like a feather it dances on the edge of my lip— I have but to whisper and you die.

(Nicias throws his arms about her to restrain her, but, with one twist of her supple body, she eludes him and stands alone, upright and defiant.)

DAMIEL—Woman, all you say is vain. For your body or how it appears or how you adorn it, I care nothing. I see it not. That is not you. It will pass and worms will feed upon it, but you will remain. It is your soul that beckons me. Your sins

THAIS

have made it hideous, but in repentance you shall cleanse and purify it. I have been sent to save you from yourself.

THAIS—(*Has received this bold yet mystic declaration with anger dissolving in incredulity and terror. For a moment she is thoughtful, bewildered, then with a light hysteria she laughs.*)

You hear this Christian madness! Tell me, Dorion, Eucrites, Philina, Chereas—tell me, Nicias, is Thaïs beautiful or not?

ALL—Yes. Yes. . . .

NICIAS—You are wrong to be angry with this folly.

THAIS—True.

NICIAS—Remember, I promised you a comedy. Let him amuse you.

THAIS—(*Caressingly.*) You are ever wise. (*Approaching Damiel mockingly.*) Come, Damiel. Holy Damiel, come; let

THAIS

us wreathe you with roses. We'll perfume your locks. Music there. To thee I'll sing. Before thee I'll dance. (*Drawing nearer and nearer, she postures about him caressingly.*) Behold my ugliness! Upon my hideousness feast! (*Whispers in his ear, her breath warm upon his cheek:*) What is there real but love?

DAMIEL—(*Has stood rigid, his eyes closed, his hand clasping his breast. With a cry he rushes past Thaïs toward the gate, but his way is blocked by the jeering guests, who tear the headpiece and mantle from him and shower his ragged figure with armsful of flowers.*)

THAIS—A comedy indeed, Nicias. Have we not been well diverted, friends?

ALL—(*Amid the laughter and jeers.*)
Yes. Yes.

DORION—Here is a conquest for our queen. Who ever heard of such a lover?





THAIS

THAIS—A new kind indeed. Let us go in, and feast and sing, and drink, and love, —(*with a significant glance at Damiel*)— and forget! (*Remembering his words, she repeats:*) “Hideous!”

NICIAS—No, Thaïs; thou art beautiful beautiful.

THAIS—And he comes before me “as before a sepulcher” and bids me “rise and follow him.”

NICIAS—Nay, you are the temple of life and love.

(*One of the courtezans having held his rood mockingly before him, Damiel grasps it and holds it as if a standard of hope and victory.*)

DAMIEL—It is in vain that you revile me. (*With his eyes upon the rood.*) I fear no evil. I go. I shall kneel without your gate. There will I wait.

THAIS

THAIS—(*Facing him indignantly.*) You will wait in vain!

DAMIEL—Nevertheless, there will I wait. And you will send for me, and I will come.

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

END OF ACT TWO

THE THIRD ACT

SCENE

The Temple of Love in the garden surrounding Thaïs' house. It is night. Out of the shadows of the poplars, sycamores, and turpentine trees, and "the trees and shrubs brought at great expense from India and Persia," rises a Greek Temple, in which is the couch of the courtesan. Soft turfy paths lead in all directions into caressing shadows. Falling water in imitation of a woodland rill trickles and dances off under the leafy bushes. Circular benches of marble are supported by fabulous monsters. On tripods are braziers of incense which throw forth their sweet scents in almost imperceptible smoke. In great vases of onyx bloom rare and exquisite flowers. On one side, near but unseen, is Thaïs' house. Above the luxurious foliage rises an ivy-hung sculptured colonnade, and beyond

THAIS

one catches a glimpse of a shadowy pool and the high stone wall which encloses the garden. The couch within the Temple is overladen with rich stuffs and with "cushions embroidered by the yellow men of Cathay." Near the Temple a tongue of pale fire from a bronze torch laps the silent darkness. The warm houselights play upon the stone floor of the portico. The rill dances in the silver moonlight. The soft strains of the cythera and pipes float out from within the house.

AT RISE OF CURTAIN

Adhemes, Crobyle, and Myrtale and the other slaves lounge in the garden awaiting the guests, who are within, still on the supper couches. Cephene comes into the garden from the house, bearing a heavily laden tray.

ADHEMES—What have you there?

CEPHENES—Breast of pheasant, a cut of young lamb, bread and cake, wild olives, pomegranates and apples.

THAIS

ADHEMES—Stolen sweets, eh, to munch here in the garden?

CEPHENES—And the gods were as gracious to Cephenes as they are to the stranger at our gates, they would be for me.

ADHEMES—You take them to the hermit, eh?

CEPHENES—Yes.

ADHEMES—In expectation of reward? Go back.

CEPHENES—If reward there be it will come from my mistress, for 'tis she sends me.

ADHEMES—Then see you eat it not yourself.

CEPHENES—It's a sore temptation. Methinks it's no profitless business being a hermit at a courtesan's gate. Since this be the fare, I myself have a stomach for such a life.

ADHEMES—Be on your way with it.

THAIS

CEPHENES—And it's lucky I've but two hands.

ADHEMES—Else?

CEPHENES—A third would make a marvelous fine feeder.

ADHEMES—'Twould be a blessing to stop your mouth even with a Christian's victuals. Out. Out.

CEPHENES—These same Christians talk of martyrdom. But martyrdom is death, and death's oblivion. It's nothing compared to the agony of a keen nose and a sharp appetite behind such a tray of food as this, engaging both hands to carry it. I would *I* were a hermit.

(He departs through the foliage toward the unseen gate in the wall.)

CROBYLE—An hour ago I took him a goblet of wine by my mistress' order. He refused it.

THAIS

ADHEMES—What said he?

CROBYLE—Nought. He waved it aside. And he has been there now six hours.

ADHEMES—He came before the sun set and it is now the ninth hour. Sat he in the same place?

CROBYLE—He has not moved. With his hands crossed in his sleeves, his eyes fixed on the gate, yet vacant of any answering glance, he sits erect, not daring through the long hours to even rest against the wall.

CEPHENES—(*Returns running and chuckling, bearing the tray as before.*) I tell ye I like that hermit.

ADHEMES—Why so?

CEPHENES—(*Sitting, resting the tray on a bench and applying himself to the food.*)

He did refuse to touch this food. Not a bite would he take, nor of pheasant, cake or

THAIS

fruit. I told him that if he ate it not I should, and he still refused, and I'm as good as my word.

ADHEMES—He will neither drink wine nor taste food?

CEPHENES—He did take food, though not this. The porter passed with a basket of black bread to be thrown the dogs. He begged a crust of him and munched it dry. And refused this steaming pheasant!

(He gorges.)

MYRTALE—Drive him away.

ADHEMES—I begged our mistress that I might.

MYRTALE—And she answered?

ADHEMES—No.

CROBYLE—He is a mystic.

MYRTALE—He casts spells.

CROBYLE—He will foretell your death.

THAIS

MYRTALE—Do you think he can cast his spell upon Thaïs?

CROBYLE—She seemed sad at supper.

CEPHENES—You do not think he is a new lover?

ADHEMES—Who can tell?

CEPHENES—For my sake I hope not.

ADHEMES—For your sake? For *your* sake?

CEPHENES—And he convert her to preferring black bread to my cooking, I'll be hunting a new roof.

(Laughter is heard from within, mingled with voices speaking.)

ADHEMES—Hurry! Within! All of you. They'll be coming into the garden.

(Myrtale and Crobyle go toward the house.)

Quick, Cephenees, in with you.

THAIS

CEPHENES—One moment while I lighten this load.

ADHEMES—(*Grasping the tray.*) And increase your own?

CEPHENES—(*Up and after him.*) Stop. I'll come. Here! Here! (*Grasps tray.*)

ADHEMES—Hurry. Do not be seen.

(*He departs into the house.*)

CEPHENES—(*Mumbling to himself:*)
And if I be seen I pray the gods of pots and
kettles that it be not without good food. . . .
The newcomer is a good man. He hath
proven himself my friend. . . . (*With an
admiring sigh over the food before him:*)
I like that hermit. (*He goes after the others
into the house.*)

(*The music, which had stopped before
the laughter was heard, now strikes up in
a new tempo.*)

THAIS

(For a moment the garden is empty, and the night, with its soft and varied lights, the ripple of the cascade, and the cadence of the music floating out among the shadows, is allowed to work its spell.)

ARISTOBULUS—*(Strolls out upon the portico, and, supporting himself against a pillar, he draws back his hair and opens his tunic at the neck, as if to drink in the cooling night.)*

DROSE—*(Steals out and, standing behind him, turns the length of her bare arm against his.)*

ARISTOBULUS—*(Starts and, turning impulsively, encircles her with his arm and holds her in a long kiss. Then he whispers:)*

Come, into the night.

(They disappear in the shadows beneath the low-hanging boughs.)

PHILINA—*(Laughing, runs out from the portico and across the garden. She trips and falls upon the steps of the Temple.)*

CHIEREAS—*(Chases after her and with a*

THAIS

garland of roses he ropes her and draws her to him, both laughing with a note of hysterical gaiety. He checks her laughter with a kiss.)

Philina!

PHILINA—Chereas!

CHEREAS—To-morrow you shall have a fillet set with amethysts.

PHILINA—The stone that I love best!

CHEREAS—I'll buy you a Nubian slave girl for your very own.

PHILINA—Chereas! A Nubian!

CHEREAS—You love me, Philina?

PHILINA—And you can ask?

CHEREAS—Are you glad that I am not as Thaïs' new friend? He is rough and wild as those who live under the earth and are besmirched with the smoke of Hades.

PHILINA—Sh! The mysteries of love must forever remain secret. I would prefer to be kissed by the mouth of smoking

THAIS

Aetna than by this man. But Thaïs, who is beautiful and adorable as the goddesses, must, like the goddesses, listen to all entreaties.

THAIS—(*Has appeared unobserved through the colonnade, and startles them by whispering with light raillery:*)

Take care, Philina; Chereas, beware what you say. The monk is a magician and will enchant you. He hears whispered words and unspoken thoughts. While you sleep he will tear out your heart and in its place put a sponge, so that when you drink you die.

PHILINA—(*Jumping up with a cry of reproach:*)

Oh! Thaïs! And he is there, only there beyond the gate.

CHEREAS—(*Enfolding her.*) Come away.

THAIS

Over here where the shadows are low.
Come.

(He leads her away to a remote corner of the garden.)

THAIS—*(Hesitates a moment when they are out of sight, then glancing off, first in the direction of the gate and then back into the house, lest she be followed, she comes out into the garden, crossing to the barriers of green. She peers through to make sure the others are no longer near, and with a movement of decision returns towards the gate.)*

NICIAS—*(Advances from the direction of the house.)*

You are looking for Daniel?

THAIS—I was faint. The house smothered me. The lights blinded me. I wanted the night.

NICIAS—And me? *(As she does not answer him, he asks with a changed tone,*

THAIS

into which comes something of resentment:)

And him?

THAIS—Did I not command you not to follow me? (*She crosses away from him.*)

NICIAS—(*Follows her.*) You are changed.

THAIS—(*Summoning a light tone:*)

Changed? No. Yet, what if I am? Moods are but the garments of the soul. . . . I shall change as I please.

NICIAS—Thaïs. . . . You say what you do not believe.

THAIS—It is not so.

NICIAS—You say what you do not feel. . . . Are you indeed changed?

THAIS—No. No, Nicias. I am weary.

NICIAS—(*Drawing her toward him.*)

Come, let us rest.

THAIS—(*Disengaging herself.*) It is not rest I want. It is relief. I am weary

THAIS

of men like you, smiling, perfumed, pleasant and selfish. I am weary of all that I know.

(She throws herself on a bench.)

NICIAS—*(Comes to her and softly whispers her name, but she does not answer:)*

Thaïs. . . . Thaïs. . . . Do not harbor such thoughts. As mine are all of you, let yours be only of me. . . . Do you know when I read what I see on the page?

THAIS—*(With a weary indifference.)*
What?

NICIAS—Last night I held in my hand a manuscript dictated by the gravest of stoics. It was full of virtuous precepts and noble maxims. Yet before my eyes danced thousands of little Thaïses. Each was the height of my finger, yet their grace was infinite and they were my one and only Thaïs. There

THAIS

were some who trailed after them mantles of purple and gold, others like a cloud floated in the air in vanishing draperies. Others, the better to inspire pleasure, lay motionless, expressing no thought. Finally there were two, so like it was impossible to distinguish one from the other. Both smiled. One said: "I am Love," the other "I am Death."

THAIS—(*At this word shudders as if she had been struck.*)

NICIAS—Yes, when beneath my eye was the line where it is written: "Let nothing turn thy mind from virtue," I read: "The kisses of Thaïs are more ardent than flames. They are sweeter than honey." Thus by your fault does the philosopher interpret philosophy. Whoever we are we discover our own thoughts in the thought of another,

THAIS

and we read books as I read this one. . . .

Thaïs. . . . (*Bending over her and raising her in his arms.*)

You weep. . . .

THAIS—And I must not. I may not. Men do not love cheeks that are stained and eyes that are red.

NICIAS—Nay, the eyes forget the tears that are shed.

THAIS—But the heart?

NICIAS—Your heart is full?

THAIS—One drop would o'erflow it.

NICIAS—Of love, Thaïs?

THAIS—Of fear. . . . Even now, with your arm about me, my head on your breast, I feel an icy finger on my shoulder, and I dare not turn to look, for I know that standing there, invisible, is Death.

NICIAS—(*Laughing.*) What matters it? Whether it be our destiny to descend into

THAIS

eternal night with whitened hair and wrinkled cheek, or that this very night that laughs back at a smiling sky is to be our last, what matters it? Let us enjoy life. And life is experience. There is no other intelligence than that of the senses. What we are ignorant of does not exist. Why torment ourselves for a mere nothing?

THAIS—I thought so once, but now I can't tell why I despise those who, like you, hope nothing and fear nothing. I want to know! I want to know!

NICIAS—And when you know all, what do you know?

THAIS—Nothing.

NICIAS—Why bother to know all when one has all? See see what I have brought you. . . . Pearls. . . . Hang them about your white shoulders.

THAIS—They are the tears of the gods.

THAIS

NICIAS—Then these are their blood.

THAIS—Rubies!

NICIAS—When you gaze into them, let their crimson depths reflect the ardor of Nicias' love.

THAIS—(*Holding them out in each hand, she contemplates them at first with delight, but in another moment she returns them to him.*)

No, I want them not.

NICIAS—I have never found you in this mood before.

THAIS—(*Moving away.*) I want to be alone.

NICIAS—You love me? Thais, . . . you love me still?

THAIS—Of course, . . . yet . . . can't you understand that sometimes . . . Oh, Nicias, leave me.

NICIAS—Are you not mine? Do not be

THAIS

sad. One is happy in this world when one forgets the world. Come, let us deceive life. Let us love one another.

THAIS—Love! Love! What is love!

(She throws herself on the couch in the Temple.)

NICIAS—Everything! *(He sits by her, and, leaning over her, whispers softly:)*
Thaïs I wish only to be the wreath that binds your tresses, the tunic that enfolds your beautiful body, nay, the sandal under your foot. Let my caresses be your tunic and your wreath. Let us forget everything.

THAIS—Ah, Nicias, you do indeed lull me to forgetfulness.

NICIAS—Remember only that I love you, that everything I have is yours.

THAIS

THAIS—You do not find me hideous?

NICIAS—You are unrivaled.

THAIS—Ah!

NICIAS—You are yourself again. Thaïs is happy once more?

THAIS—To be happy one must forget.

NICIAS—To forget, one need but love.

(He folds her in a long embrace.)

You are mine once more.

THAIS—Yes.

NICIAS—The mood is passed?

THAIS—Yes. Yes.

NICIAS—I could have believed

THAIS—What?

NICIAS—That Damiel had cast a spell on you.

THAIS—You have made me forget him.

NICIAS—He is still at the gate?

THAIS—(*Does not reply.*)



THAIS

NICIAS—(*Starting up.*) I'll look.

THAIS—Hold!

NICIAS—Why do you stay me?

THAIS—Why do you wish to go?

NICIAS—To send him away.

THAIS—No.

NICIAS—What!

THAIS—Not yet.

NICIAS—Why not?

THAIS—Not yet, Nicias, not yet. . . .

NICIAS—(*Grasps her by the wrist.*)

Thaïs!

THAIS—Oh, you are hurting me.

NICIAS—Forgive me. . . .

(*Grasps her in his arms.*)

Thaïs are you not mine?

THAIS—Yes. . . .

NICIAS—Forever?

THAIS

THAIS—Yes.

NICIAS—(*Kisses her. . . .*)

You will send him away?

THAIS—Yes.

NICIAS—Now?

THAIS—Now.

NICIAS—I'll go myself.

THAIS—No. No. I'll send
for him and speak him civilly. Go.
. Go in to the others. Do not
let them disturb us. And then when
he is gone I'll send for you. The
night is young. Send a servant to
him to say that I would speak to him here.
. There, there Nicias.
Go go

(*Nicias disappears toward the house.*)

(*Myrtale crosses to summon Damiel.*)

(*Thaïs throws herself at full length on*

THAIS

her couch, admiring her beauty in her mirror.)

(After a moment Damiel appears through the shadows.)

DAMIEL—You have sent for me?

THAIS—Remembering your prophecy that I would send. It was made in presence of so many. Not to send were so humiliating—and to send is so easy. So of your prophecy I make a prophecy, and not bravado merely, by sending for you.

DAMIEL—This is mockery. Why do you send for me?

THAIS—To send you away.

DAMIEL—You can send me no farther than your gate, Thaïs, for there will I wait your call to come and take you with me.

THAIS—My servants shall drive you away.

DAMIEL—I will come back.

THAIS

THAIS—With clubs and stones they will drive you off.

DAMIEL—I will come back.

THAIS—The guards shall arrest you and imprison you. . . .

DAMIEL—And when they do release me I will return.

THAIS—But I will not call you even then.

DAMIEL—Nevertheless, I will wait.

THAIS—How long?

DAMIEL—Till you do call.

(He moves toward the gate.)

THAIS—Where do you go?

DAMIEL—As far as your gate.

THAIS—Hold. . . . One moment. . . .
What would you have me do?

DAMIEL—Renounce sin.

THAIS—You juggle words. What you

THAIS

call sin I know for pleasure. . . . You wish that I should follow you.

DAMIEL—Yes.

THAIS—Whither?

DAMIEL—Ah, you'll come!

THAIS—Whither?

DAMIEL—To the west near the sea is a convent of women with their feet upon the earth and their hearts in Heaven. There shall you know a joyful peace like a sun-burnt crater healed with snow. That solitude is the audience chamber of God, where He speaks to the soul through the ear of silence. At the door of this refuge you shall have the kiss of peace and welcome from their mother Albina.

THAIS—Albina? A daughter of the Cæsars?

DAMIEL—Herself. Born to the purple she clothes herself in drugget. A daughter

THAIS

of the masters of the world, she has raised herself to the rank of a servant of the Lord.

(He waits a moment for her answer.)

What do you say?

THAIS—You speak well.

DAMIEL—You'll come.

THAIS—If I refuse?

DAMIEL—You'll come. . . . you will not? You refuse?

THAIS—And if I do?

DAMIEL—I will wait.

THAIS—(*Coming near him, caressingly.*) Do you not know that all end by loving Thaïs?

DAMIEL—'Tis thus that I begin.

THAIS—Eh?

DAMIEL—I do love thee, Thaïs. . . .

THAIS—Ah!

THAIS

DAMIEL—I love thee more than myself.

THAIS—At last.

DAMIEL—More than my life.

THAIS—You confess!

DAMIEL—For you have I left my lamented desert. For you my lips vowed to silence have pronounced profane words. For you I have seen what I ought not to have seen. I have heard what is forbidden to hear. For you I have walked day and night through the sands. For you I have placed my naked feet upon vipers and scorpions. But I love you not as these men, with the desire of the flesh. Mine is the unknown love. I love you in spirit and in truth; I love you for God and for time eternal.

THAIS—My friend, show me this marvelous love. Hasten! I'm impatient to

THAIS

know the joy you announce. But in truth I fear to be forever ignorant of it, and your promises will vanish in words. It is easier to promise a great happiness than to give it. Each has his talent. I think your gift is speech. You speak of an unknown love. It is a long time since kisses were first given. It would be extraordinary if there remained any secrets of love. Upon this subject lovers know more than philosophers.

DAMIEL—You jeer at me. I bring you the unknown love.

THAIS—You come too late. I know all loves.

DAMIEL—The love I bring you is full of glory; the love you give breeds only shame. . . .

THAIS—Shame! Shame! You dare to speak to me of shame! You are bold to offend your hostess. Look at me and say if I

THAIS

resemble a creature crushed with shame! I have sowed pleasure at every step. I am celebrated throughout the universe. I am more powerful than the masters of the world. I've seen them at my feet. Look at me. Look. . . . To those who see Thaïs from the top of the Serapeum, when I pass in the street, I look like a grain of rice, but that grain of rice has caused among men enough grief, despair, hatred and crime to fill Tartarus. You are mad to speak to me of shame when everything proclaims my glory.

DAMIEL—Woman, we have neither the same language nor the same thoughts. . . . Who will inspire me with burning words that will melt you like wax in my breath, that the fingers of my desires may mold you? Who will give me the virtue that will recreate you so weeping you'll cry,

THAIS

"Now indeed do I live." Who will change me into a Jordan whose waters spread over you shall give you eternal life!

THAIS—You speak of life eternal. . . . What you say seems read from a talisman. There is but one thing I fear in life.

DAMIEL—That is?

THAIS—Death. Have you charms to ward off death?

DAMIEL—Death is but the door of life, the door from darkness into light. What you call life is death. By death alone shalt thou live.

THAIS—But I love life so. . . . It is so sweet to love and be loved. . . .

DAMIEL—Your friends love not thee. The love they love is but the youth of flesh. When years with seams and age with ugliness lay hands on you, you will be abandoned, forsaken, alone.

THAIS

THAIS—You do not know the depths of love.

DAMIEL—Nor you its heights.

THAIS—You do not know the thrill of power. Without empire, without army, without gold or crown or scepter, with only this body, these arms, these eyes, these lips, I reign o'er men.

DAMIEL—'Tis vain. 'Twill pass. 'Tis all unreal. You shall grow old and your body cold. . . .

THAIS—No!

DAMIEL—Your arms shall wither and your lips thin. . . .

THAIS—No! No!

DAMIEL—Already the lines seam your chin . . . your cheeks draw. . . . Paint, not youth, doth color your skin.

THAIS—No! No! No!

THAIS

DAMIEL—Each day brings new terrors.
This you know is the truth.

THAIS—No! You lie! You lie! Go.
. . . Go! . . . Go! . . . Thaïs I am. Thaïs I
shall remain. Thaïs the courtezan, daughter
of Venus. I believe in nothing more.
Nothing more do I desire. Nor you, nor
your truth, nor your life, nor your God.
Go! Go!! Go!!!

DAMIEL—I shall wait.

(He turns and departs to the gate.)

THAIS—*(As he goes.)* Out! Out!! I
care not. Wait if you will. Though you
die where you stand, you'll wait in vain.
. . . . Within! Within there! Nicias
. . . . Eucrites Chereas. . . . Am I
deserted? *(Crossing and calling through
the gardens.)*

Philina! Drose! Friends! Friends!





THAIS

(Enter Nicias, Hermodorus, Zenothemis, Eucrites and Dorion from the house with their mantles. Enter Chereas, Aristobulus, Philina and Drose from the other part of the garden.)

ALL—What is it? What's to do?

NICIAS—Thaïs! You're pale. You are ill. What is it?

THAIS—I . . . was here . . . here in the garden . . . here . . . I . . . *(her effort to tell is a failure, and she lies)* . . . alone. The night . . . the loneliness . . . I . . . I . . . I imagined I . . . I was frightened . . . and I called. I'm glad you've come. But see your mantles what do they mean?

ALL—It is late. We depart.

THAIS—No. No. The night's young. Here 'neath the stars we'll sing and I'll dance. Within! The cythera and pipes.

THAIS

None shall go. Here, here in the face of the moon, . . . let the night invite you if I may not. Wine there.

(Adhemes, Crobyle, Myrtale and Egyptian slaves appear, bearing golden jugs of wine and goblets of gold. Musicians sit near the Temple of Love and play.)

(The men who have come out of the house are in wine, especially Nicias.)

ALL—You will dance? Come, Thaïs! Let us sit.

THAIS—One moment first while I recover and you refresh with wine.

(All sit; the wine is served.)

NICIAS—Come, Thaïs, pledge yourself to me.

THAIS—You are already pledged to Bacchus. But Bacchus and Venus, 'twere

THAIS

heaven with them though all the other gods were not.

NICIAS—(*Dropping his voice to a note of earnest confidence.*)

He is gone?

THAIS—If he waits, let him make what he can of the echo across the wall.

(*Taking a goblet.*)

To whom shall we drink?

ALL—To Thaïs.

THAIS—To the gods! To the gods of love! In love there is no yesterday and no to-morrow. Only the soft, warm, shadowy now! The daughters of love are indeed the daughters of a day and a night.

(*She throws the goblet in the direction of the gate.*)

NICIAS—Then let us bathe the night in

THAIS

wine, and from the rosy mists let love appear.

(Drinks.)

HERMODORUS—(*Who reclines on the Temple steps.*)

And you bathe longer, friend, the wine will seal your senses.

NICIAS—(*Laughing, throws the emptied cup at Hermodorus.*)

THAIS—While your tongues are loose you shall tell me of your love. Nicias, . . . why did you leave Euphemine?

NICIAS—For the best reason in the world. She no longer had charm for me.

THAIS—As when younger?

NICIAS—Ah, you should have seen her at twenty!

THAIS—And you, Hermodorus. . . . You have abandoned Delectra. . . . Why?

THAIS

HERMODORUS—She deceived me. . . .
She ceased to be beautiful.

(The men all laugh.)

THAIS—Her beauty fled and so did you.
And, Dorion, what has become of the di-
vine Myrna?

DORION—She committed the unpardon-
able sin. . . . She grew old.

THAIS—The sin to which we are all pre-
destined. . . . to grow old. . . . Mu-
sic. Music there. Play, and I'll dance.

*(The music plays and she makes an ef-
fort to dance. She sways faintly on the
first step, and hands are extended to her,
but she continues. In another moment
she falls in Adhemes' arms insensible.)*

*(The others all leap to their feet. A
hand is raised and the music stops.)*

ALL—She has fainted! She is ill! Thaïs!
Thaïs!

THAIS

NICIAS—Go go, call the servants.

THAIS—(*Reviving.*) Nicias What is it?

NICIAS—You are ill. Go . . . go . . . my friends.

THAIS—(*Rising.*) No . . . no . . . see, I am well.

ALL—It's late. We go.

(They start to leave toward the gate, where Damiel stands his vigil.)

THAIS—Not that way, . . . please. The nearer way is through the house . . . here. Good night. Good night.

(They depart toward the house.)

NICIAS—(*Has stood apart, yet near. He seems to sense a significance in her having sent her friends by the farther gate.*)

THAIS—(*Turning from her departing guests, she discovers Nicias remains.*)





THAIS

Ah, Nicias, you do not go?

NICIAS—I could not leave you. . . .
You are ill.

THAIS—No, I am well. . . . I wish to
be alone.

NICIAS—Then I'll go.

THAIS—Good night.

NICIAS—(*Turns to go by the gate where
Damiel has waited.*)

Good night.

THAIS—Not that way.

NICIAS—And why not?

THAIS—Not that way. . . .

NICIAS—Damiel is there.

THAIS—I have sent him away.

NICIAS—The Christian dog!

THAIS—Nicias. . . . Nicias. . . .

NICIAS—He has fuddled you with his
mystic jibberings. . . .

THAIS

THAIS—You are drunk.

NICIAS—But not blind. He is there!

THAIS—Perhaps. But I sent him away. I drove him out. . . . I cursed him. I, . . . if he be there it is because his faith is strong.

NICIAS—(*Jeering.*) His faith? . . . His appetite . . .

THAIS—(*With revulsion.*) Oh, Nicias!

NICIAS—He has told you he has come to procure your soul. He lied to you.

THAIS—No!

NICIAS—If he believed it, he lied to himself. . . . Your soul! . . . For all he is a hermit yet he is a man . . . a man of flesh and blood and appetites . . . of blood as hot as flows in the veins of any man you know. Of appetites like yours and mine. . . .

THAIS—Oh, Nicias!

THAIS

NICIAS—And what's behind it all?
"Come with me" what does he demand? You follow him. . . . Whither? Why? Ye gods, it is transparent as the day! Your soul? Your soul! Ha! You need not follow him that which he comes for is here here here where you are it is you! you!! you!!! And you love him? You think I'll wait to be cast off by you?

THAIS—(*With great agony of spirit.*)
Nicias!

NICIAS—You think I'll be abandoned by a courtesan like you. No! I'll go, and you may give yourself to him! (*He goes toward the house.*)

THAIS—(*Crushing her hands into her face.*) Oh! Oh!! Oh!!!

(*She supports herself against the couch. As she recovers, her eyes rest a*

THAIS

moment on the little table and what she sees there transfixes her attention. She reaches and draws her mirror before her face, but cannot look on it.)

(Her spirit is chilled in the nakedness of lost illusions. Her tongue and throat are dry and she can scarce raise her voice above a whisper as she calls:)

Damiel! . . . Damiel!!

(She listens, but hears nothing, and turns, crossing slowly away from the gate.)

Gone! Nicias was right. . . . He sought only the toll of love.

DAMIEL—*(Appears, dimly visible in the shadows of the branches. With his accustomed tone of imperturbable resignation he says:)*

You called?

THAIS—Ah! You were there. You were faithful!

THAIS

DAMIEL—Why have you called?

THAIS—Because because, my friend, I am weary unto death. Where can I find rest? My forehead is burning my arms are so tired that I should not have the strength to seize happiness were it brought within my reach.

DAMIEL—Follow me and you shall know perfect peace.

THAIS—If I could search the mystery of this love of thine.

(She looks him full in the face, then looks away with vacant concentration on the problem which confronts her. . . . the light of determination now radiates from her whole person. She lets fall the mantle from one shoulder and turning swiftly she glides to Damiel's side and swings the loose end of the mantle so that it turns about his knees and feet, as if to envelope them both. With both her bare arms extended aloft she holds the mantle

THAIS

above her head and his, and leaning very near him she whispers in her softest accents:)

Damiel! you have conquered!

DAMIEL—(*Senses the significance of this temptation. He cannot move. With a parched tongue he answers:)*

You will follow me?

THAIS—You have said that you love me.
. . . . Damiel

DAMIEL—(*After a furious struggle he breaks the spell and staggers from her.*)

No! No!! No!!! I love you! Yes,
Thaïs, I do love you!

THAIS—Ah!

DAMIEL—But 'tis your soul the
better part of you, and not your flesh. . . .
And you you cannot love me! See!
See!! See, I am hideous, ragged, bloody!

THAIS

(*As she approaches.*) Off! Off!! Stand back!

THAIS—No man has e'er refused before.
Are you a god to thus spurn Thaïs?

(*Approaching his side again.*)

DAMIEL—No. . . . Alas, I I am
a man!

THAIS—And you refuse me?

DAMIEL—(*Again upon the brink he closes his eyes as if in prayer and summoning all his strength he says:*)

Yes!

THAIS—(*Her astonishment succumbs to conviction in the presence of this man who is more than ever an enigma to her.*)

Nay, Daniel, if you be less than a god you are indeed more than a man.

DAMIEL—(*Still fighting.*) No, I'm but
a man.

THAIS

THAIS—(*A great peace and resignation come over her. As she lowers her eyes she becomes conscious of her nakedness and with unconscious modesty she again folds herself from head to foot in her mantle.*)

What you have said I now believe. Tell me, shall you be able to do for me what neither the priests of Isis or Hermes or Juno, nor the seers of Chaldea, nor the Babylonian magi could do? Will your love ward off death from me?

DAMIEL—Woman, whoever wishes to live will live.

THAIS—I would like to believe. I have not found happiness. You have stirred the waters of my soul and drawn to the surface what has slept below. And though I do believe you, your words are full of mystery.

DAMIEL—Your life, as mine, is full of mystery. The yesterdays . . . the to-





THAIS

morrows the rainbow's end the
moonbeam's kiss! "Who knows whither
the clouds have fled, in the trackless skies
they leave no wake." The world is mirage
and moving sand a vain murmur
. . . . You weep.

THAIS—Yes.

DAMIEL—Tears! The ransom for your
soul.

THAIS—Life. . . . Death. . . . Hap-
piness. I want to know. I want to know.

DAMIEL—Come. . . . Follow me and
you shall know.

THAIS—(*Places her hand in his.*) I will
follow you.

(*As Damiel leads her toward the gate,
Nicias appears before them.*)

NICIAS—This, then, is my reward? All
you have I have given you. This palace,

THAIS

this garden, robes, jewels, all! With lies and infidelity you repay my generosity and love! Out out both of you. I take them back. . . . nothing nothing more of mine is yours!

THAIS—Peace, Nicias. I shall have no further need of your gifts.

NICIAS—You go then?

THAIS—Yes.

NICIAS—You follow him?

THAIS—Yes. Take back what you have given me. . . . That I can return Your kisses I shall wash out in the fountains of prayer.

NICIAS—Nay, Thaïs, he deceives you.

THAIS—He speaks the only truth.

NICIAS—He deceives you. He loves you.

THAIS—He saves me.

NICIAS—He steals you.

THAIS—No!

THAIS

NICIAS—He steals you—with mean hypocrisy of virtue—

THAIS—Oh!

NICIAS—He steals for himself—

THAIS—Nicias!

NICIAS—You are his dupe!

THAIS—No!

NICIAS—His toy!

THAIS—No! No!!

NICIAS—His tool!

THAIS—No! No!! No!!!

DAMIEL—Nicias!

NICIAS—(*To Damiel:*) You? You hypocrite! In mean pretense of spiritual call, beneath the cloak of sanctity you come to me, your friend, with hands in mine! My friend! My friend!! (*To Thais:*) Your youth's the magnet—your beauty drew him here—

THAIS—Stop!

THAIS

NICIAS—He's welcome—his portion's but the dregs—the dregs! A stale and withered thing! . go, then, go! Go with the dog! (*To Daniel:*) Take her! Bear off your prize! But, I tell you, monk, you take a harlot!

DAMIEL—I take a saint!

(*Daniel leads Thaïs majestically forth as to victory.*)

(*The curtain falls.*)

END OF ACT THREE

THE FOURTH ACT

SCENE I

A tableau, interpolated, in which, through a mystic light, is dimly visible a palm grove on an oasis in the desert, and it is shown how Thaïs and Damiel approach and are met by Albina and her White Sisters, and how he delivers Thaïs into their keeping.

SCENE 2

The courtyard of the retreat of the White Sisters, on the sea-coast near Alexandria. Along one side runs the wall to a height of eight or nine feet, thick and unbroken save by the gateway. The solid gate has a small aperture through which arrivals are spoken before they are admitted. The other sides of this courtyard are enclosed by the low rambling walls of the convent, which are pierced at intervals by the small windows of the nuns' cells and by the low arched entrances.

THAIS

The tone of all the architecture is buff and white. The sandy courtyard is buff. Beyond the walls rise the tops of palm trees and a gnarled old fig tree. A cluster of palms rises in the center of the garden, spreading a grateful shade over the hot sands. Beneath it is a bench. The white tropical light is tempered by the buff and amber reflections of the sandstone of the walls and the sand underfoot, strong but mellow, by the soft, green turf and the overhanging trees. A hedge of white lilies in full bloom grows under the convent walls.

AT RISE OF CURTAIN

The porter, Maria Pia, sits at the gate. Others are engaged in spinning, embroidery and breaking the earth. Their habit is a coarse cloth of creamy white. The sleeves are wide and long, folded back in loose, broad cuffs, and the head is wrapped in the same soft cloth. Albina, the mother superior, comes into the courtyard.

ALBINA—Sister.



THAIS

JONATHA—(*Advancing a step.*) You spoke?

ALBINA—Tell the infirmarian to join me here.

JONATHA—(*Bows silently and retires.*)

ALBINA—(*Addressing Maria Pia at the gate.*) Sister? Are all the nuns within the walls?

MARIA—All save Angelica and Rosalia. They carried medicine to a woman sick with the fever.

ALBINA—You may go. Some one will be here when they return.

MARIA—(*Bows silently and crosses into the convent.*)

THE INFIRMARIAN—(*Passes out as Maria passes in.*) Mother, you sent for me?

ALBINA—You have visited the cell of our Sister Thaïs to-day?

THAIS

THE INFIRMARIAN—I have this moment left her.

ALBINA—What change?

THE INFIRMARIAN—None that I can see. Life hangs by a slender thread.

ALBINA—You think her hour is near?

THE INFIRMARIAN—We need not be surprised at any change.

ALBINA—Her spirit is strong?

THE INFIRMARIAN—An example to us all. She is most happy. She has the holy expectation of a saint.

ALBINA—In passing from this world she has but one regret, one wish; to see again the holy Damiel, who brought her here, to let him know how great a joy his victory over her has given her.

THE INFIRMARIAN—Do you think, mother, he will come?

ALBINA—Nay, his last words in parting

THAIS

were that he would return to his cell in the desert to await in prayer and fasting their reunion before the throne of Heaven. She will never see him more.

THE INFIRMARIAN—I would not have believed it.

ALBINA—What do you mean, sister?

THE INFIRMARIAN—'Twas in his eye. It was when he said farewell.

ALBINA—It was no common battle that he waged in forsaking the desert to rescue this daughter of sin. His eye no doubt was lighted with the holy ecstasy of triumph.

THE INFIRMARIAN—It was sadder, mother.

ALBINA—Sadder?

THE INFIRMARIAN—He loved her.

ALBINA—Oh! It was his zeal for her salvation.

THAIS

THE INFIRMARIAN—Mother, it was not in his face.

ALBINA—He has conquered it; he never has returned.

THE INFIRMARIAN—And live he will.

ALBINA—May Heaven take Thaïs first.

THE INFIRMARIAN—Amen!

(Maria Pia approaches out of the convent.)

MARIA—Mother?

ALBINA—Daughter?

MARIA—It is the hour when our sister, Thaïs, has been accustomed to come out into the courtyard here.

THE INFIRMARIAN—Pray, let her come. Remaining there within her cell will not prolong her soul's imprisonment. The bars that cage her spirit grow weaker every hour.

THAIS

MARIA—Mother, her eyes, her heart, her hope are on the happy moment of release.

ALBINA—This holy aspiration is a foretaste of Heaven. . . . Let her be brought.

MARIA—(*Bows, and retires into the convent.*)

ALBINA—Let us go in.

(*Albina and the Infirmarian move in the same direction. They are arrested by a knock without at the gate.*)

ALBINA—See who is there.

THE INFIRMARIAN—(*Crosses to the gate and raises the little wooden blind.*) It is Rosalia and Angelica.

ALBINA—Admit them.

(*She goes into the convent.*)

(*The Infirmarian opens the gate. Angelica and Rosalia enter quickly, as if pursued.*)

THAIS

ROSALIA—Quick, shut the gate. . . .
Do you remember holy Damiel, who
brought our sister Thaïs here?

THE INFIRMARIAN—You've seen him?

ROSALIA—Yes. As we returned. We
followed near. At first we thought him just
a pilgrim. But when he reached the gate
he stopped, and so did we. He seemed most
undecided, advanced and turned, and then
advanced again. But when he turned we
saw his face. Such agony!

THE INFIRMARIAN—You're sure you
recognized him?

ROSALIA—Yes. It was Damiel.

THE INFIRMARIAN—He is there, now?

ROSALIA—He walked back and forth be-
fore the gate twice, raising his hand to
knock, but something held it. . . . sweat
stood on his brow, his eyes were bloodshot,
and his hand trembled as if with palsy.





THAIS

THE INFIRMARIAN—And then?

ROSALIA—After a great struggle he departed, his head bent and his hands clasping his breast.

ANGELICA—Twice he stopped and turned.

THE INFIRMARIAN—But, he is gone?

ROSALIA—Yes.

THE INFIRMARIAN—Our sister is spared! She comes. . . .

(The Infirmary, Rosalia, Angelica and the others depart by the other archway as Maria Pia and Jonatha reappear. Between them and leaning on them is Thais in the habit of the White Ladies.)

THAIS—*(Pauses a moment, a smile of ecstasy on her upturned face.)* How beautiful! Oh, peace benign! What gladness in the earth and skies, the birds and flowers! Or is this gladness but the echo of mine

THAIS

own? Come. (*She comes forward to the bench under the palms and sits.*) Maria?

MARIA—Yes? (*She drops on one knee at one side and before Thaïs.*)

THAIS—And my Jonatha?

JONATHA—I am here. (*She also kneels, at the other side.*)

THAIS—My sisters! When did holy Damiel first deliver me into this tabernacle of peace?

MARIA—'Tis six months now.

THAIS—He stood at the door of my cell. When Albina had given me this robe, the bowl of water and the dish of meal, he took wet clay into his hand, added a hair from his head, and with his own hands sealed the door against the day when Heaven should loose the seal and deliver its servant.

JONATHA—I remember the morning. I

THAIS

bore you bread and found the seal was broken.

THAIS—It was a miracle!

MARIA—And you were ill, to death.

THAIS—To life! At that moment my soul began its journey home. . . . What says the Infirmary? Will I enter into the great peace to-night? Or, will my joy be delayed? . . . Be not afraid to speak. . . . Be glad as I am. . . .

MARIA—I know that envy is a sin, but I do envy you who are so soon to enter Heaven.

THAIS—Oh, promise divine!

JONATHA—If you could but bear us with you.

THAIS—Some breath of Heaven is in the air already. See . . . there's not a cloud. The air is crystal and the light spun gold.

THAIS

See yonder sunbeam, a thread on which my soul shall travel to its spouse.

MARIA—Pity us, sister, who cannot hope so soon for happiness.

JONATHA—We must linger among the shadows while you enter into reality.

THAIS—Once I thought that only real which I could see and touch. I loved only those things which came from the hands of man. My pleasure fed on that which changed and passed. Then came the holy Daniel and raised me up and led me here . . . here, where I've found all. No man can wreck this peace or steal this joy, it shall not change, it cannot die. Oh, happiness without alloy. If only in this moment of supremest joy. . . .

MARIA—What wish remains unsatisfied?

THAIS—I would this gratitude unuttered should not die upon my lips. Would

THAIS

Heaven should send me Damiel that he who gave me so much happiness might share it. If he could know this ecstasy I owe to him! Maria!

MARIA—Yes?

THAIS—Jonatha!

JONATHA—Well? Sister, what is it?

THAIS—Hark! Hark!

MARIA—I hear nothing.

THAIS—He comes!

MARIA AND JONATHA—Thaïs! Sister!

THAIS—My prayer is answered. He is at the gate.

MARIA—Nay, sister, we hear no one.

JONATHA—No one.

THAIS—Go! Go! He comes! He comes to take my blessing! Now he will know! Open! Open quickly! He is there!

THAIS

(Maria and Jonatha rise and retreat from the ecstatic Thaïs.)

Damiel! Damiel!! Damiel!!!

(The cry is answered by three knocks at the gate.)

Open! Open!!

(The nuns run to the gate and open it.)

(Damiel rushes in and falls prostrate at Thaïs' feet.)

(The nuns, overwhelmed with what they have seen, retreat into the convent.)

THAIS—I knew that you would come.

DAMIEL—*(Lifting himself on his hands, half reclining, not trusting himself to raise his eyes, much less to look at her.)*

You wished me here?

THAIS—To pour out my thanks. Look, look in my eyes. They mirror my heart.





THAIS

. . . . Can't you read of the ecstasy thrilling my soul!

DAMIEL—You wanted me here?

THAIS—'Twas my prayer; once more to see you, and you to see me, and to know what a victory you had gained.

DAMIEL—Thaïs!

THAIS—Thaïs no longer. Thaïs was consumed in the fire of your faith. That night in the Temple of Love was her last. Only now do I live! And you heard me call!

DAMIEL—At night

THAIS—Holy hour!

DAMIEL—In my sleep.

THAIS—A vision.

DAMIEL—A vision.

THAIS—From Heaven!

DAMIEL—(*Mortified and agonized, he bows his head.*) Alas!

THAIS

THAIS—Nay, tell me all.

DAMIEL—All?

THAIS—Since your victory. . . .

DAMIEL—(*Bitterly.*) My victory!

THAIS—Hasten I am eager
you returned. . . .

DAMIEL—I returned to the desert, the
anchorite's rest. . . .

THAIS—And I in this haven secure!

DAMIEL—But the peace had departed, I
knew it no more.

THAIS—Ah! You could not be sure
your victory would endure.

DAMIEL—I knew only struggle, unrest,
and regret. . . . One night you appeared
to me in the agony of death. . . .

THAIS—Death is but the door of life!

DAMIEL—(*Still on the ground at her
feet, half reclining on his hands, not yet
able to look upon her face.*) Thais is dy-

THAIS

ing! The words rang in my soul. I longed to see you once more! To see you to touch you!

THAIS—To bless me!

DAMIEL—I started . . . I ran At every step I cursed myself. Thaïs is dying! And she is not mine. Dying, and I've lost her. Fool! Fool that I was to have thought there was anything in the world but you. As if anything counted when one has seen Thaïs. She opened her arms and I did not fall into them. . . . I dreamed. . . . I groped I stumbled I missed my way, deluded and blind. . . . And in my heart rang the wild peal, "Thaïs is dying!" But it is not true. . . . (*Turning to her.*) Deny it. . . . You'll live. . . . Don't you see, Thaïs. . . . Don't you see, I love you!

THAIS—'Tis my soul.

THAIS

DAMIEL—'Tis you! You! I deceived myself. I lied to you.

THAIS—No!

DAMIEL—(*Rising on his knees.*) Love drew me first from the desert to you love draws me back to you now.

THAIS—No! No!

DAMIEL—Do not die!

THAIS—Oh, spoil it not.

DAMIEL—Thaïs, my beloved!

THAIS—You gave me so much; do not take it away.

DAMIEL—Life without you is blackness, despair. (*Standing.*) Live. Live for me!

THAIS—You rave. You are mad.

DAMIEL—Thaïs! I love you.

THAIS—(*Has drawn herself to her feet and cries in agonized protest:*) Father!
(*As his faith had strengthened her, so*





THAIS

now he realizes the strength of her faith. Overwhelmed with shame, he sinks to the ground at her feet, his face buried in his hands.)

THAIS—(*With a sweet, masterful solemnity:*) Daniel Father by that faith by which you did recreate me, I bid you rise. Are you blind? When the scales fell from my eyes did they fall upon thine? Awake! Be thyself! My deliverer! My savior! As thy faith saved me, let mine save thee. . . . (*Yet softer, as her strength fails, and she sinks on the bench:*) The last grains of this handful of clay sift through the fingers of life. . . . The heavens open! I see the roses of eternal morning!

DAMIEL—Intercede! Ask forgiveness for me!

THAIS—(*Full upright, with the pale voice of ecstasy.*) I feel the breath of an-

THAIS

gels in my face. My ears are deafened with the canticles of joy. My eyes are blinded with the dawn of life eternal!

(A smile sits upon her upturned face. A flood of golden light descends from above and bathes her in a celestial aureola. Damiel feels this, turns, beholds and rises to his full height at her side, his face raised in humility to Heaven.)

DAMIEL—Oh, miracle! Wonderful are the ways of the Lord, who sent me to save Thaïs, the Courtezan, that I might be saved by Thaïs the Saint!

(The curtain falls.)

END OF THE PLAY.

DATE DUE

[illegible]

#47-0108 Peel Off Pressure Sensitive

1. *Quercus agrifolia* (Oak)

2. *Pinus strobus* (Pine)

3. *Juniperus communis* (Juniper)

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 Wilstach, Paul, 1870-1952.
 Thais, "the story of a
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Number of Volumes.—Any reasonable request for books will be granted if applicant wishes them for study or research work and books are not needed elsewhere.

Time Kept.—Books must be received at the State Library within 28 days from the date of loan. They may be renewed for the same period upon request, as long as needed for study, unless reserved for other borrowers. Date upon which books will be due in the library is given on notice of shipment. Some books will be issued for shorter period and may not be renewed.

Groups of books for home clubs and libraries are loaned for longer periods of from three to six months.

Fines.—A fine of one cent a day must be paid for books kept without renewal, beyond period for which loan is made. No book will be loaned to anyone who has failed to meet the obligations of borrowers as given in these rules. Notice will be sent when books are five days overdue without having been renewed.

Lost and Injured Books.—Borrowers are held responsible for books and are required to pay for lost and injured volumes. Number of pieces loaned is given on notification postal and borrowers are held responsible for this number unless notice of shortage or error is sent immediately upon receipt of package.

Books must be kept clean, must not be marked and corners of leaves must not be turned down.



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